

Verbon Dea

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"I will make you
a light to the
nations."

WEEK I

(Jan 6 – 12, 2020)

General Theme:

Missionaries for all peoples.

General Objective:

To enter in Jesus' spirit of openness and dialogue with all peoples and learn from him to be missionaries of communion for the world of today.

Specific Objective: To learn from Jesus' concrete attitudes in order to build bridges of peace rather than walls of division with our brothers and sisters, especially those whom we find *different*.

Introduction

We have just celebrated the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, his manifestation as Savior of the world. The magi's coming to Jerusalem to pay homage to the king of the Jews means that the message of salvation is open to all people. If God reaches out to all, we too must go out and build bridges of dialogue with the world of today.

This is in fact the invitation for 2020 in the Filipino Catholic Church. We are celebrating the year of Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue and Indigenous Peoples. A Pastoral Letter from the CBCP described what the year 2020 entails:

"This year will be devoted to exploring new ways of being community through ecumenical and inter-religious relationships and action. Open, honest, respectful—loving—dialogue of life, prayer and action is the only way towards community."

Let us learn from the humble baby at the manger how to build bridges rather than walls with our brothers and sisters.

MONDAY

Breaking walls that divide

For Christ is our peace, he who has made the two people one; destroying, in his own flesh, the wall—the hatred—which separated us.

(Eph 2:14)

When faced with the "gentiles" of today—people who think, live or worship differently than us, many feelings of hostility can surface in our hearts. Jesus invites us today to confront these feelings and learn from him to break down from within the walls that we may be secretly building among us and our brothers and sisters.

How do I regard people who are different from me? What kind of differences are particularly difficult for me to welcome? How can I break the wall that divides me from them?

TUESDAY

Living as God's children

*Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing for joy. Know that he, the Lord, is God. He made us, we belong to him, we are his people, the sheep of his flock. **(Ps 100:2-3)***

We, who are all God's children I have one common origin: God's love. God loves all his creatures, and therefore we are invited to receive every fellow human—regardless of the differences in terms of race, social status, nationality, etc—as a brother or sister, cherished as such.

What resistances do I still find in my heart in front of my brothers or sisters who are different? How can I overcome them?

WEDNESDAY

Bearers of God's seed

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet man cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

(Ecc1 3:11)

As Catholics, we believe that God has sown his eternal seed in all humanity (cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 2). Believers and non-believers carry a God-like seed which compels us to the pursue of good and truth. Finding these seeds of God in every person entails a new vision.

Lord how can I have this new vision in front of my brothers and sisters? What attitudes prevent me from seeing your seeds in them?

THURSDAY

Dialogue that builds Communion

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there

remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Mt 5:23-24)

Jesus regards dialogue and communion between us as a condition to enjoy friendship with God. Dialogue is, according to Pope Francis, "*the way to better understand one another and to work together in building a climate not only of tolerance but also of respect.*"

What situations are especially challenging for me to practice dialogue? What grace do I need from you, Lord, in order to overcome my challenges in dialogue?

FRIDAY

Practicing forgiveness

"Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to

him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven" (Mt 18:21-22).

Reconciliation is a condition to build peace. We are called to discover in the depths of our heart the power of forgiveness in order to build up true fraternity. When we learn to live in forgiveness, we grow in our capacity to become men and women of peace.

What is Jesus' invitation for me to practice forgiveness? What small but concrete step can I take today towards forgiveness?

SATURDAY

Be a bridge of peace!

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Mt 5:9)

In front of a society where building walls of division is becoming the norm, Jesus invites us to be both meek and

courageous in order to be true peacemakers. "*The world does not need more empty words, it needs committed, active peacemakers who do not exclude or manipulate, but are open to respectful dialogue.*" (Pope Francis)

Faced with my daily circumstances, do I perceive the call of Jesus for me to be a peacemaker? How can I build bridges of peace instead of walls of division?

SUNDAY

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

1st Rdg - Is 42:1-4, 6-7
Resp. Psalm - Ps 29:1-10
2nd Rdg - Acts 10:34-38
Gospel - Mt 3:13-17

2020 Year of Ecumenism,
Interreligious Dialogue and
Indigenous Peoples

